

DESCRIPTIONS OF LITTLE-KNOWN
AUSTRALIAN SNAKES.

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Plate xxvii, and Text figs. 32-38.

Seven species are herein dealt with; of these, two, namely *Demansia carinata* and *Furina multifasciata*, are represented by figures only. *Pseudechis guttatus* is re-described and a key to members of the genus provided. *Tropidechis duncensis*, *Denisonia suta*, and *Denisonia maculata* are also re-described and a variety of the last established and re-named. The head shields of all the species included are figured in detail. We have to tender our thanks to Mr. H. M. Hale for the photographs and drawings utilized.

DEMANSIA CARINATA Longman.

Diemenia carinata Longman, Mem. Queensl. Mus. iii, 1915, p. 31, pl. xiv.

Fig. 32.

Detailed drawings of the head of the specimen illustrated by the photograph published by Longman are here supplied.

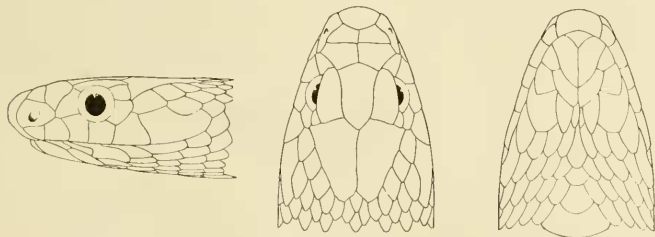
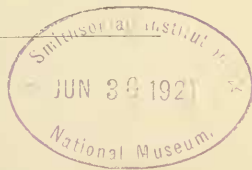


Fig. 32. Head of *Demansia carinata*.

Bicarinate ventral shields are generally indicative of climbing, as in *Dendrophis* and *Hoplocephalus* (1), and the very pronounced keels in this *Demansia* may be associated with similar habit.

(1) Waite: Rec. Aust. Mus. vi, 1905, p. 38.



PSEUDECHIS GUTTATUS De Vis.

Pseudechis guttata De Vis, Ann. Queensl. Mus., No. 6, 1905, p. 49.

Fig. 33.

Scales in 19 rows. Ventrals 181-193. Anal divided. Subcaudals 52-59, the great majority (37-44) being single.

Description. Vertical diameter of eye equal to its distance from the mouth; pupil round. Rostral broader than deep, the portion visible from above about a third as long as its distance from the frontal. Internasals one-half as long as the prefrontals. Frontal rather small, a little wider than the supraocular (exceptionally a little narrower), two-thirds the length of the parietals; two-thirds as wide as long; shorter than its distance from the end of the snout. Nasal divided; posterior nasal just in contact with the single preocular. Two postoculars. Temporals 2 + 2, the lower anterior large and wedged in between the fifth and sixth labials. Six upper labials, third and fourth entering the eye; third, fourth and fifth sub-equal in depth. Three or four lower labials in contact with the anterior chin shields, which are a little shorter than the posterior.

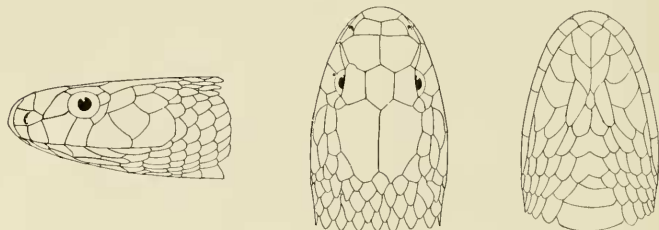


Fig. 33. Head of *Pseudechis guttatus*.

Colours. Dark olive brown above; many of the dorsal scales with a single white or yellow spot; spots disappearing at about two-thirds the length of the body. Head and nape uniform dark olive brown above and lighter beneath. Lateral scales of body each with a yellowish marking. Ventrals slate grey with lighter markings.

The four specimens examined show considerable variation in colour, and in one the light spots are so prevalent on the anterior third of the body as to give a creamy effect to the whole dorsal surface.

Total Length (type). 1100 mm.; tail 172 mm.

Loc. Cecil Plains, S. Queensland (type); Cannon Creek, S. Qld.; Kooralbyn Station, S. Qld. (contained fifteen immature eggs); Range, Toowoomba, S. Qld.

Pseudechis guttatus may be distinguished from *P. australis* Gray and *P. colletti* Boulenger by its smaller number of ventrals. From *P. denisonioides* it may be separated by its shorter frontal and divided anal. The presence of two anterior temporals distinguishes it from *P. cupreus*.

Total Length. 1235 mm.; tail 180 mm.

KEY TO THE SPECIES OF PSEUDECHIS.

- a. Anterior subcaudals single
 - b. Scales in 17 rows on the body
 - c. Anal divided
 - d. Frontal once and one-fourth to once and two-thirds as long as broad; rostral scarcely broader than deep, anal very exceptionally entire ... *porphyriacus*
Belly blue var. *mortonensis*
 - dd. Frontal nearly twice as long as broad; rostral scarcely broader than deep... *cupreus*
 - ddd. Frontal once and two-thirds to twice as long as broad; rostral considerably broader than deep *australis*
 - dddd. Frontal as broad as long, wider than the supraocular... .. *darwiniensis*
 - cc. Anal entire
 - Frontal almost twice as long as wide, rostral wider than deep *denisonioides*
 - bb. Scales in 19 or 21 rows on the body
 - e. Frontal as broad as the supraocular
 - f. Ventrals 221-224 *papuanus*
 - ff. Ventrals 181-193 *guttatus*
 - ee. Frontal much narrower than supraocular ... *colletti*
- aa. Subcaudals all in pairs, scales in 23 rows
 - g. Anal entire
 - h. Frontal twice as long as broad *scutellatus*
 - hh. Frontal once and a half as long as broad ... *microlepidotus*
 - gg. Anal divided *ferox*

DENISONIA SUTA Peters.

Hoplocephalus sutus Peters, Monatsb. Akad. Berlin, 1863, p. 234.

Denisonia suta Bouleng. Cat. Snakes, Brit. Mus. iii, 1896, p. 339.

Fig. 34.

Scales in 19 rows. Ventrals 169. Anal entire. Subcaudals single in 29 rows.

Description. Vertical diameter of eye twice its distance from the mouth. Pupil vertically elliptic. Rostral much broader than deep, just visible from above. Internasals shorter than the prefrontals, which latter are broader than long. Frontal nearly twice as wide as the supraocular; one-half longer than wide and longer than its distance from the end of the snout: a little shorter than the parietals. Nasal entire, in contact with the single preocular. Two postoculars. Temporals 2 + 2, the lower anterior wedged between the fifth and sixth labials. Six upper labials, third and fourth entering the eye. Three lower labials in contact with the anterior chin shields, which are as long as the posterior.

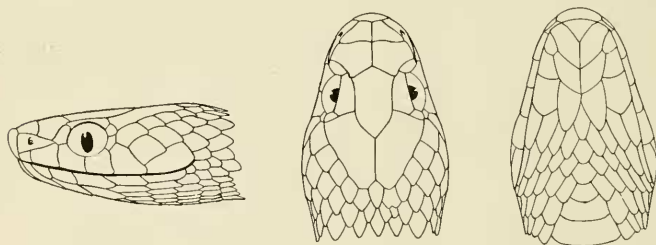


Fig. 34. Head of *Denisonia suta*.

Colours. Olive brown above. Head slightly darker above; nape dark brown. A black streak arises on the upper part of the rostral and passes through the nostril to the eye, thence to the upper part of the sixth labial and the nape marking of which it forms the lower border. A yellow marking on the pre-, supra-, and postoculars partly encircling the eye. Black blotches on the lower part of the rostral and first four labials; also on the mental, first chin shield, and first lower labial. The rest of the rostral, labials, and entire under parts to the tip of the tail pale yellow. A median, irregular, reddish streak from about the sixth ventral to the second preanal scale. Lower body scales and lateral edges of ventrals margined with grey.

Total Length. 490 mm.; tail 56 mm.

Loc. Moolooloo, South Australia. Collected F. Angel and E. Savage.

The single specimen examined appears to be the third known; the definite locality recorded indicates that the species inhabits the country bordering the dry interior regions. It was taken during an excursion of the Field Naturalists' Section of the Royal Society of South Australia.

As Boulenger ⁽²⁾ pointed out, this species is allied to *Denisonia forresti* and *D. frontalis*. Longman ⁽³⁾ has also made reference to the variety *propinqua* De Vis. He examined seven specimens of *D. frontalis* in the Queensland Museum, and remarking on the considerable variation in the juxtaposition or otherwise of the nasal and preocular scales, finds it difficult to separate these forms from *D. suta*.

DENISONIA MACULATA Steindachner.

Hoplocephalus maculatus Steind. Reise Novara, 1867, p. 81. Günth. Journ. Mus. Godeff. xii, 1876, p. 46.

Denisonia ornata Krefft. Proc. Zool. Soc., 1869, p. 321, and Snakes of Austr., 1869, p. 82, pl. xi, fig. 4.

Denisonia maculata Bouleng. Cat. Snakes iii, 1896, p. 341.

Plate xxvii, fig. 1, and Text fig. 35.

Scales in 17 rows. Ventrals 134. Anal entire. Subcaudals single in 24 rows.

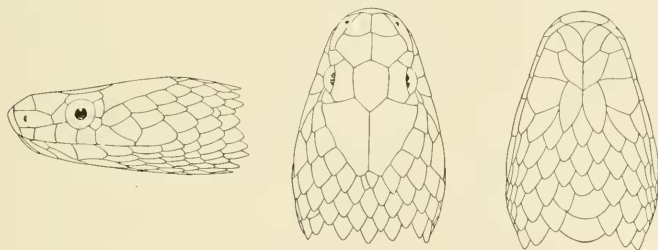


Fig. 35. Head of *Denisonia maculata*.

Description. Vertical diameter of the eye greater than its distance from the mouth and about half its distance from the end of the snout. Pupil round. Rostral almost twice as broad as deep and just visible from above. Internasals shorter than the prefrontals, the last-named being as broad as long. Frontal once and one-half times longer than broad and as long as its distance from the end of the snout; much shorter than the large parietals. Nasal entire in our specimen

(2) Boulenger: Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (7), xviii, 1906, p. 441.

(3) Longman: Mem. Queensl. Mus. I, 1912, p. 23.

(usually divided), in contact with the single preocular. Two postoculars. Temporals 2 + 2, the lower anterior wedged between the fifth and sixth upper labials. Six upper labials, the third and fourth entering the eye. Three lower labials in contact with the anterior chin-shields, which are shorter than the posterior.

Colours. Dark reddish brown above. Head slightly darker above, all the head shields mottled with yellow. Lower labials brown, each with an oblique yellow streak. A darker edging on the nape. Anterior ventrals largely mottled with brown. Markings in the thoracic region confined to the lateral edges of the ventrals. Lateral body scales also mottled; subcaudals with median, faint brown markings.

Gunther (4) noted that Krefft's *Denisonia ornata* "was accidentally provided with a separate shield in the loreal region."

Total Length. 360 mm.; tail 42 mm.

DENISONIA MACULATA var. DEVISI nom. nov.

Hoploccephalus ornatus De Vis, Proc. Roy. Soc. Qld., i, 1884, p. 100, pl. xv (not *Denisonia ornata* Krefft). Bouleng. Cat. Snakes, iii, 1896, p. 341.

Plate xxvii, fig. 2, and Text fig. 36.

Scales in 17 rows. Ventrals 129-140. Anal entire. Subcaudals single, 25-37 (type).

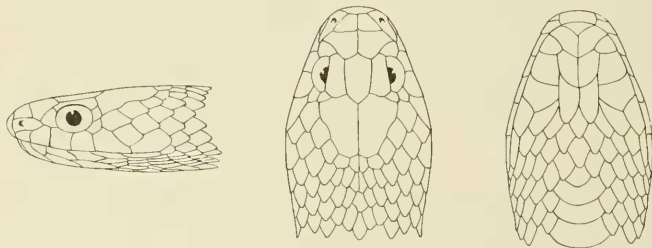


Fig. 36 Head of *Denisonia maculata* var. *devisi*.

Description. Vertical diameter of the eye greater than its distance from the mouth. Pupil vertically elliptic. Rostral broader than deep; visible from above. Internasals shorter than the prefrontals, the last-named broader than long. Frontal wider than the supraoculars, nearly twice as long as wide and slightly longer than its distance from the end of the snout; shorter than the parietals.

(4) Gunth. Journ. Mus. Godefr., xii, 1876, p. 46.

Nasal entire, in contact with the single preocular. Two postoculars. Temporals 2 + 2; lower anterior large, and partly wedged in between the fifth and sixth labials. Six upper labials, third and fourth entering the eye. Three lower labials in contact with the anterior chin shields, which are a little shorter than the posterior.

Colours. In spirit, yellowish, with 52 more or less irregular or broken, dark brown bars across the back, extending from the nape to the beginning of the tail; the latter with brown zigzag lines above. Head pale, largely obscured with darker mottlings, but with yellowish spots above; labials yellow, the sutures broadly edged with dark brown. A linear series of blotches between the bars and the ventrals, definitely marked on the anterior part of the body, but elsewhere less defined, forming V- or W-shaped figures. Lower surfaces immaculate but with some spots on the gular region.

Total Length. 345 mm.; tail 56 mm.

Described from six specimens—four from Western Queensland, namely, Surat (De Vis' type), Aramac, Tambo and Coreena Stations; and two from unknown localities.

This variety is readily distinguished from *D. fasciata* Rosen⁽⁵⁾ (West Australia) by its lesser number of ventrals. Boulenger pointed out that *Hoplocephalus ornatus* agrees in all structural characters with *D. maculata*, but these barred snakes, which are apparently confined to Western Queensland, are so strikingly distinct in colour that they require a varietal name. The proportions of the head shields in our series vary somewhat, but we find that the variety *devisi* has a relatively longer frontal.

TROPIDECHIS DUNENSIS De Vis.

Tropidechis dunensis De Vis, Ann. Queensl. Mus., No. 10, 1911, p. 20.

Fig. 37.

Scales in 23 rows. Ventrals 216. Anal entire. Subcaudals 54 pairs.

Description. Eye large, its distance from the mouth equal to 2/5 the vertical diameter. Pupil round (vertically elliptic on one side). Rostral broader than deep, just visible from above. Internasals as long as the prefrontals. Frontal three-fourths as wide as long, one-third broader than the supraocular, longer than its distance from the end of the snout and three-fourths as long as the parietals. Nasal entire, in contact with the single preocular. A single large postocular. Temporals 3 + 4. Seven upper labials, third and fourth entering the eye. Three

(5) Rosen: Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (7), xv, 1903, p. 179.

lower labials in contact with the large anterior chin shields, which are longer than the posterior. Scales on body strongly keeled, ventrals smooth.

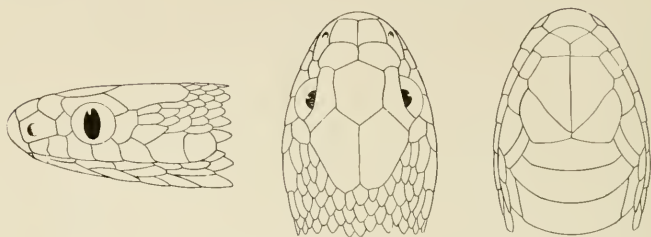


Fig. 37. Head of *Tropidechis dunensis*.

Colours. Completely bleached after long preservation in spirit.

Total Length. 370 mm.; tail 50 mm.

Loc. Darro, Darling Downs, Queensland.

The very large anterior chin shields are a distinguishing feature of this species. Unfortunately only one immature example is available for examination.

FURINA MULTIFASCIATA Longman.

Furina multifasciata Longman Mem. Queensl. Mus. iii, 1915, p. 30.

Plate xxvii, fig. 3, Text fig. 38.

As this species has not been previously figured, a photograph of a preserved specimen and drawings of the heads shields are now furnished.

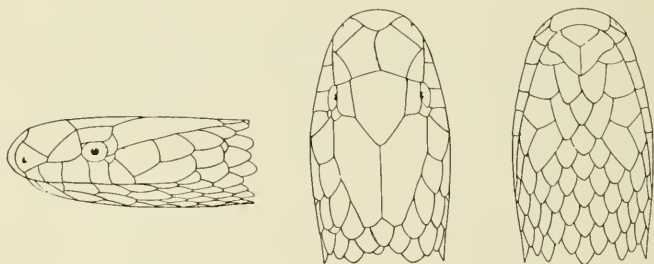


Fig. 38. Head of *Furina multifasciata*.

Explanation of Plate xxvii.

Fig. 1. Head of *Denisonia maculata* Steindachner (enlarged).

Fig 2. *Denisonia maculata* var. *decisi*, nom. nov.

Fig. 3. *Furina multifasciata* Longman.